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Table 1. Cultivated Land and Rural Population of Central-South China*

(unit: 1,000 shih-mou--1,000 persons)
S-shih-mou
A-acres

Province	Cultivated Land	Rural Population	Farm# Households	Shih-mou per Household	Shih-mou per Farmer
1946					
Honan	98,499 S (16,416.5 A)	26,220	5,082	19.5 S (3.25 A)	3.75 S (0.63 A)
Kiangsi	43,339 S (7,223.2 A)	10,034	3,292	13.2 S (2.20 A)	4.35 S (0.73 A)
Hupeh	64,500 S (10,750.0 A)	19,046	3,960	16.4 S (2.73 A)	3.45 S (0.58 A)
Hunan	50,206 S (8,368.7 A)	18,992	3,900	13.9 S (2.32 A)	2.70 S (0.45 A)
Kwangtung	40,939 S (6,823.1 A)	19,448	3,479	11.9 S (1.98 A)	2.10 S (0.35 A)
Kwangsi	27,493 S (4,582.1 A)	11,645	2,330	11.9 S (1.98 A)	2.40 S (0.40 A)
Total	324,976 S (54,162.7 A)	105,405	22,023	---	---
Average	---	---	---	14.7 S (2.45 A)	3.08 S (0.51 A)
1955					
Honan	99,681 S (16,613.5 A)	35,372	7,074	14.1 S (2.35 A)	2.80 S (0.47 A)
Kiangsi	43,339 S (7,223.1 A)	13,418	2,683	16.1 (2.68 A)	3.20 S (0.54 A)
Hupeh	64,500 S (10,750.1 A)	22,292	4,444	14.5 S (2.42 A)	2.90 S (0.48 A)
Hunan	50,457 S (8,409.5 A)	26,581	5,316	9.5 S (1.58 A)	1.90 S (0.31 A)
Kwangtung	40,296 S (6,716.0 A)	27,816	5,563	7.2 S (1.20 A)	1.40 S (0.23 A)
Kwangsi	27,493 S (4,582.1 A)	15,649	3,130	8.9 S (1.48 A)	1.80 S (0.30 A)
Total	325,766 S (54,294.3 A)	141,668	28,210	---	---
Average	---	---	---	11.5 S (1.92 A)	2.30 S (0.38 A)

*For 1946 statistical figures, see The Statistical Year Book of China, 1948, pp. 70-71. The 1955 data was estimated from Chung-kuo Jen-min Kung-ho-kuo Fen-sheng Ti-t'u, [Atlas of the People's Republic of China, by Provinces], Shanghai, Ti-t'u Ch'u-pan-she, 1953.

#For calculating the number of farm households, figuring is based on the average of five persons in each farm household as reported by Chou En-lai (NCNA, Sept. 24, 1954).

(Table 1 faces p. 643)

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the basic factor in any discussion of Chinese agriculture.[1] According to the census[2] completed on June 30, 1953 by the Communist government, the total population of this region is 176 million. If we calculate the rural and urban population by the ratio[3] of 86.74 to 13.26 as the Communist do, the total rural population amounts to 152 million. How the Communists arrived at this ratio has not been explained. It seems that this arbitrary ratio is too high in comparison with the statistics of 1946 issued by the Nationalist government, which set the rural population figure of Central-South China at 105 million, constituting about 80 per cent of the total.[4]

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Based on this new census, the cultivated land per farm household and per capita is even lower now than in 1946. Some of these marked changes are shown in Table 1.

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1. John L. Buck, Land Utilization in China, Chicago, 1937, pp. 267-69. According to a study which covered 16,786 farms in 22 provinces of the 1929-33 period, the average size of a farm was 25.4 shih-mou [4.26 acres] which is substantially below the minimum size considered necessary by even the most optimistic writers, such as Chin I-hung, on Chinese peasantry.

2. Jen-min Jih-pao [People's Daily], Nov. 1, 1954, p. 1.

3. Ibid.

4. Chung-hua-min-kuo T'ung-chi Nien-chien [The Statistical Yearbook of China], Nanking Bureau of Statistics, 1948, pp. 70-71.

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Table 1 indicates that the average size of farms in Kwangtung Province is only 6.7 shih-mou (1.1 acres), the smallest in Central-South China. The farms in Kiangsi Province rank first in average size, 14.9 shih-mou (2.5 acres), but these averages are substantially below the pre-war size of farms in Japan, which was 16.5 shih-mou (2.75 acres).[5]

III. THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM OF CENTRAL-SOUTH CHINA

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The Chinese Communists' Land Reform Movement followed a deliberate pattern, although methods of implementation varied from place to place, as when the techniques employed were modified in order to conform to special circumstances in different localities. The Land Reform Law in Central-South China was promulgated in July 1950. The law itself is too long to be discussed here, but it was on the basis of class differentiation that land redistribution was begun.[6] (For the methods used by the Chinese Communist Party in carrying out the land reform program, see Section V, "Communist Political Power in the Rural Area" in chapter on "Political Dynamics" of this handbook.)

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5. Wu Yuan-li, An Economic Survey of Communist China, New York, Bookman Associates, 1956, pp. 117-126.

6. The Agrarian Reform Law of the People Republic of China, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1950.